

Remarks

Applicants have carefully reviewed the Office Action mailed on July 8, 2008 and the Advisory Action mailed on October 30, 2008. Applicants respectfully traverse (and do not concede) all objections, rejections, adverse statements, and adverse assertions made by the Examiner. With this amendment, claims 47 and 54 are amended. No new matter is added. Please cancel claim 59 without prejudice. Claims 47-58 remain pending. This amendment is being filed with a Request for Continued Examination.

Formalities

On the Summary Sheet of the Office Action, all of claims 47-59 are indicated as being rejected. However, in the Detailed Action some of the claims were not listed as being rejected. During a brief telephone conference with the Examiner on August 19, 2008, the Examiner indicated that claims 47, 48, 49, 50, and 54-59 were intended to be rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Consequently, the rejection of claims 47, 48, 49, 50, and 54-59 will be addressed below.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 47, 48, 49, 50, and 54-58 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamamoto et al. in U.S. Patent No. 5,059,186 in view of Klumpp in U.S. Patent No. 2,274,736. Without conceding the merits of the rejection, please note that claim 59 is now cancelled without prejudice, rendering the rejection moot. Applicants reserve the right to pursue this claim or claims of a similar scope in the future.

Regarding claims 47, 48, 49, and 50, claim 47 is amended to recite that the distal strain relief has a first flexibility adjacent a distal end thereof and a second flexibility different from the first flexibility adjacent a proximal end thereof. Support for this amendment may be found, for example, at page 7, lines 23-24. Neither Yamamoto et al. nor Klumpp, either alone or in combination, appear to teach or suggest these limitations. For example, the molding 110 in Yamamoto et al. does not appear to have the claimed first and second flexibilities and Klumpp does not appear to remedy this shortcoming. Based on this distinction, Applicants respectfully submit that amended claim 47 is patentable over the cited art. Because claims 48, 49, and 50 depend from claim 47, they

are also patentable for the same reasons as claim 47 and because they add significant elements to distinguish them further from the art.

Regarding claim 54-58, claim 54 is similarly amended to recite that the distal strain relief has a first flexibility adjacent a distal end thereof and a second flexibility different from the first flexibility adjacent a proximal end thereof. For reasons similar to those set forth above in relation to claim 47, Applicants respectfully submit that these limitations distinguish claim 54 as well as claims 55-58 depending therefrom from the cited art.

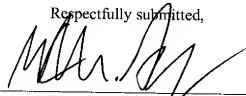
Claim 51 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Yamamoto et al. as modified by Klumpp and further in view of Wijkmap et al. in U.S. Patent No. 5,167,647. For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that amended claim 47 is patentable over Yamamoto et al. and Klumpp. Wijkmap et al. fails to overcome the deficiencies of the cited art. Consequently, Applicants respectfully submit that amended claim 47 is patentable over the combination of Yamamoto et al., Klumpp, and Wijkmap et al., to the extent that such a combination is even possible. Because claim 51 depends from claim 47, it is also patentable for the same reasons as claim 47 and because it adds significant elements to distinguish it further from the art.

Conclusion

Reexamination and reconsideration are requested. It is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Issuance of a Notice of Allowance in due course is also respectfully requested. If a telephone conference might be of assistance, please contact the undersigned attorney at (612) 677-9050.

Respectfully submitted,

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